

Resolution Opposing New and Expanded Gas Infrastructure in Washington

WHEREAS the world's foremost body of climate scientists, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has reported that we have only until 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5° C in order to mitigate devastating worldwide climate impacts such as extreme temperatures, heavy rains, drought, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, and depletion of freshwater sources; and

WHEREAS if we do not take immediate action to radically reduce our emissions in line with the established Paris Target of 1.5° C, these climate impacts will intensify, with communities of color, low-income communities, Tribes and coastal communities often being impacted first and worst; and

WHEREAS methane has a global warming potential 86 times higher than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period and "natural" gas is comprised of 85-95% methane, and methane leaks from fracking and gas pipelines eliminate any beneficial effects of gas usage, thus making gas just as bad or worse for the climate than coal; and

WHEREAS the Interior Department has tripled the amount of federal lands leased out for oil and gas production in the past fiscal year, and the EPA has simultaneously rolled back protections for wildlife, air quality, and groundwater supplies, thereby placing the profits of the fossil fuel industry ahead of the health of United States residents; and

WHEREAS Washington State is already feeling the impacts of climate change: record-breaking wildfires having devastated our communities and caused toxic air pollution state-wide; snow packs having plummeted and available drinking water and hydroelectric capacity decreased; salmon and orca populations having become critically endangered; agricultural, fisheries and shellfish industries having suffered billion-dollar losses; and the Quinault Nation having already been forced to relocate two villages because of rising sea levels; and

WHEREAS Washington is currently facing multiple proposals for fracked gas mega-projects such as the Kalama methanol refinery and the Tacoma liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility that is currently being built without all required permits on Medicine Creek Treaty Territory, without the Puyallup Tribe's consent and in violation of treaties; and

WHEREAS such fracked gas mega-projects undermine both Washington's climate leadership and its efforts to reduce carbon pollution, and pose staggering health, safety and environmental risks to local communities by causing toxic air and water pollution at every stage of production; and

WHEREAS there is a well-documented rise in incidents of violence against indigenous women and women of color in communities near gas extraction sites, including those in British Columbia where the majority of fracked gas shipped to Washington is extracted; and

WHEREAS proposed fracked gas projects like the Tacoma LNG facility use non-commercial ratepayer dollars for private gain – 43% of construction costs being passed on to utility customers, who will see only 2% of the project's benefit; and

WHEREAS the King County Council, in January 2019, approved a 6-month moratorium on new and expanded fossil fuel infrastructure – thereby joining four other local jurisdictions in Washington, plus Portland (Oregon), Portland (Maine), and Baltimore, in enacting a *de facto* ban on new fossil fuel infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS investments in major and expanded gas infrastructure and exports will inevitably lock us into decades of climate pollution and divert money from renewable energy development, thereby frustrating our needed immediate reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and repressing the growth of green jobs in Washington; and

WHEREAS Washington ports serve as a gateway for fossil fuel companies to export gas from the interior of North America to Asian markets, and by preventing new or expanded gas infrastructure Washington can play a critical leadership role in transitioning the global economy to clean energy and keeping fossil fuels in the ground;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we strongly oppose federal efforts to roll back regulations on gas production, processing, storage and export, especially when those regulatory changes lead to increased health and safety risks for Washington communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the Washington State Department of Ecology to consider a proposed project's complete lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, including analysis of methane leakage during extraction and transport, and to reject permits for any project that would increase emissions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call for a permanent moratorium on new gas pipelines, processing, and storage facilities in Washington, other than safety-related maintenance or replacement, and for stop-work orders on all major projects currently under construction that do not have all their required permits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on each of our state and federal representatives to oppose major new and expanded gas infrastructure in Washington, including the Kalama methanol refinery and the Tacoma LNG facility; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Inslee, all of our state and federal representatives, all chairs of Democratic Legislative Districts, and the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Adopted September 24, 2019, by the Martin Luther King County Democratic Central Committee

Originated by 350 Seattle;
previously adopted in substantially similar form
by the 46th, 32nd and 43rd Legislative Districts